

Today Congressman Mike Pence appeared on CNN's American Morning, below is the transcript:

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Congressman Mike Pence on CNN's American Morning

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KIRAN CHETRY: Welcome back to the most politics in the morning. House Republicans are giving up their vacations to stage a protest in the walls of Congress. They're back from their August recess that began Friday and they're demanding that Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi bring Congress back into session to vote on an energy bill. Joining me now from Capitol Hill is Indiana Congressman Mike Pence. He's helping lead the protest and says he'll continue to do so for as long as it takes. Thanks so much for being with us this morning.

REP. MIKE PENCE: Thanks, Kiran. Good to be with you.

CHETRY: Good to have you with us. People are calling this protest a little bit of a political stunt, including Nancy Pelosi. What do you say to that?

REP. PENCE: Look, I think Friday when more than 50 House Republicans were lined up to give regular speeches on the floor objecting to the fact that Congress was taking a five-week paid vacation when we hadn't taken an up or down vote on giving the American people more access to American oil, Friday afternoon probably was a stunt. But the sustained effort by the Republican leadership that will go throughout this week and perhaps into next week, I think it's not a stunt. It's a feat. Members of Congress are giving up time with their families and with their constituents, and on a rotating basis, either here on Capitol Hill, on the floor, or in front of citizens back home with energy town hall meetings, Republicans are taking the case we ought to be here, we ought to be working. And Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi ought to call this Congress back into session, and give the bipartisan majority that supports comprehensive energy legislation with more drilling a vote.

CHETRY: If you were able to get Speaker Pelosi to bring Congress back into session, do you have the votes to pass this bill?

REP. PENCE: You know, I really believe that we do, Kiran. I've been in Congress about eight years, and during that time, I've seen votes on drilling falter again and again. But in this past year with gasoline going over \$4 a gallon, it's clear to me that there's now a bipartisan majority of Republicans and some Democrats that would support comprehensive energy legislation that included more drilling, particularly off the Outer Continental Shelf and in the Gulf of Mexico. But we obviously can't make progress on that. We can't send those signals to global markets that would affect futures, that would affect oil prices, and give relief at the pump if Congress isn't in session.

CHETRY: You guys can't even agree on whether or not it would provide immediate relief. Many Democrats, including Speaker Pelosi, says for years you wouldn't see any benefit to the

average taxpayer who's going to fill up their tank for \$4 a gallon gas if we started drilling right now.

REP. PENCE: I know the opponents of drilling make that argument very consistently. But, you know, I take case in point, a few weeks back when President Bush lifted that long-standing Executive Order banning drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf, in the next two days as you saw here on CNN, Kiran, we had the largest two-day drop in the cost of oil per barrel in 20 years. I have no doubt that the futures market would be affected in the immediate short term the day that this Congress came together in a bipartisan fashion and gave the American people more access to American oil. And as the future markets dropped, I believe you'd see the cost per barrel drop and that would have an effect and relief at the pump for working Americans.

CHETRY: You talked about President Bush. He also has the power to call Congress back into session. Have you guys called on him to do that?

REP. PENCE: A number of us have called on the President to do that. And I know that his press secretary said yesterday that he doesn't have any current intention to make that happen, and frankly, the President has a good point. He can call the Congress back into session, but he can't make them work. The reason we're focusing on Speaker Nancy Pelosi is the Speaker of the House can call the Congress back into session immediately, and she can also send to the floor the American Energy Act or some other comprehensive bill that includes, you know, conservation, alternative sources of energy, and an opportunity to vote up or down on giving the American people more access to drilling into American resources.

CHETRY: All right. You guys are still out there giving up your summer vacation. No cameras rolling, but you guys are there on the floor. Representative Mike Pence, great to see you.